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from the NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ECUMENICAL COMMISSION

NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING

"Teacher," the blind man answered, "I want to see again."

"Go," Jesus told him, "your faith has made you well."

Mark 10:51-52

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) affirms the refocus of Sorry Day to a *National Day of Healing* by the National Sorry Day Committee.

"For ten years we have commemorated Sorry Day, and while much has been achieved there is still more work to do," said Graeme Mundine, Executive Secretary of the NATISEC.

"The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this Nation continue to suffer injustice every day.

"Even people of good heart can become blind to the issues around them. They can become immune to the stream of images that tell a story, but all too often serve to stereotype and politicise the plight of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in this country," Mr Mundine said.

"We must remember that every statistic represents a family in crises, a family in mourning, a child going hungry, a father dying too young, a wife being bashed. Or a family torn apart and removed from culture and the very soul of their existence because of a cruel and misplaced government policy.

"Generations of our people have survived the legacies of colonisation but the people of this nation cannot afford to sit by while future generations inherit the dispossession and anger that is pervasive in so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, or the misunderstanding and racism that pervade so many non-indigenous families," he said.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cannot heal alone. We call all Australians to open their eyes and hearts to each other. We should not forget for one minute that the plight of our Indigenous peoples shows us the humanity of our nation.

Mr Mundine concluded, "Do those of us who are Christians accept the situation of our Indigenous peoples? Have we done enough? Are we called to examine our faith and restore our vision of what is right and just?"

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